

DEVIZES BOROUGH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Medical Officer
of Health

FOR THE YEARS 1939, 1940, 1941 & 1942.

G. H. H. WAYLEN, M.B., D.P.H., Cantab.
Medical Officer of Health for the Devizes Borough Council.

DEVIZES
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DEVIZES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

for the following years: 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1942.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit herewith my Annual Reports on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for the years 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

G. H. H. WAYLEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

41, Long Street, Devizes.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Areas in acres	1,391	1,391	1,391	1,391
Population	7,383	8,326	8,801	8,367
No. of inhabited houses	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092
Rateable Value	£43,893	£43,893	£43,893	£43,893
Product of 1d. rate ...	£171 - 1 - 1	£171 - 1 - 1	£171 - 1 - 1	£171 - 1 - 1

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births	...	...	M.52 F.50	M.73 F.67	M.78 F.104	M.70 F.75
Total	...	...	102	140	182	145
Legitimate	...	...	M.50 F.47	M.70 F.62	M.73 F.101	M.68 F.72
Illegitimate	...	...	M. 2 F. 3	M. 3 F. 5	M. 5 F. 3	M. 2 F. 3
Still Births.						
Legitimate	...	...	M. 1 F. 2	M. 0 F. 4	M. 2 F. 1	M. 1 F. 3
Illegitimate	...	...	M. 0 F. 0	M. 0 F. 0	M. 1 F. 0	M. 0 F. 0
Live Birth Rate.						
Resident	...	...	13.7	13.8	14.0	16.3
England and Wales	...	...	15.0	14.6	14.2	15.8
Crude Death Rate	...	...	10.9	13.6	12.3	11.9
Deaths—Infants under 1 yr.						
All infants	...	...	M. 0 F. 0	M. 2 F. 2	M. 4 F. 2	M. 0 F. 5
Total	...	...	0	4	6	5
Legitimate	...	...	M. 0 F. 0	M. 2 F. 2	M. 4 F. 2	M. 0 F. 5
Illegitimate	...	...	M. 0 F. 0	M. 0 F. 0	M. 0 F. 0	M. 0 F. 0

CAUSES OF DEATH RETURNED BY REGISTRAR GENERAL.

	1939.		1940.		1941.		1942.	
Typhoid & Pa. Typh. F.	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Measles	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Whooping Cough ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Scarlet Fever	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Diphtheria	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Influenza	M. 1	F. 1	M. 5	F. 13	M. 1	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Cerebro Spinal Fever ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 1	F. 1	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 0
Tuberculosis—Respir. ...	M. 2	F. 0	M. 2	F. 2	M. 2	F. 1	M. 3	F. 1
„ Other forms ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0
Genl. Par. Insane, tabes, intra. cran, vas. lesions	M. 0	F. 0	M. 3	F. 7	M. 2	F. 10	M. 6	F. 9
Diabetes	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 2	M. 0	F. 1
Cancer—All forms ...	M. 6	F. 3	—	—	—	—	—	—
„ b. cav. & oe sophag.	M. 0	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0
„ uterus	—	—	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 2	M. 0	F. 1
„ stomach & duodenum	—	—	M. 2	F. 0	M. 2	F. 1	M. 0	F. 4
„ of breast	—	—	M. 0	F. 2	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 2
„ of all other sites ...	—	—	M. 2	F. 6	M. 6	F. 2	M. 4	F. 6
Cerebral Haemorrhage ...	M. 3	F. 1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Heart Disease	M. 19	F. 16	M. 11	F. 12	M. 16	F. 18	M. 12	F. 14
Aneurysm	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Other circulatory dis. ...	M. 4	F. 6	M. 0	F. 1	M. 6	F. 0	M. 1	F. 3
Bronchitis	M. 1	F. 0	M. 6	F. 6	M. 2	F. 3	M. 0	F. 2
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 4	F. 2	M. 1	F. 4	M. 4	F. 2
Other resp. diseases ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1
Peptic Ulcer	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 1	M. 0	F. 1
Appendicitis	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 1
Nephritis	M. 2	F. 0	M. 0	F. 2	M. 1	F. 1	M. 0	F. 1
Digestive diseases ...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 1	F. 1	M. 3	F. 1	M. 0	F. 2
Puerp. & P.O. abort sepsis	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1
Other maternal causes...	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1
Prem. birth, Conj. de- bility, mal. etc. ...	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 0	F. 3
Senility	M. 0	F. 1	Under defined heading.					
Road Traffic Accidents...	No record		M. 3	F. 0	M. 1	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Suicide	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1
Other violence	M. 4	F. 1	M. 3	F. 0	M. 2	F. 1	M. 1	F. 2
Other def. diseases ...	M. 2	F. 2	M. 4	F. 4	M. 7	F. 6	M. 3	F. 7
Special Causes.								
Smallpox	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0
Poliomyelitis & polio enceph.	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 1	M. 0	F. 0	M. 0	F. 0

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Medical Officer of Health—G. H. H. Waylen, M.B., D.P.H. Cantab. (Part time).

Sanitary Inspector.—1939 and until April, 1940 (when Mr. Drabble was appointed): G. Price-Lawrence, A.R.S.I., M.R.I.P.H.H. (Volunteered for service with H.M. Forces and after serving in Malaya reported missing at Singapore. Appointment being held open by Council until demobilization. Believed Prisoner of War.)

At present: S. C. Drabble, C.S.I.B., A.I.A.S., M.S.I.A. (Also Deputy Borough Surveyor.)

Ambulance Service.—By Corporation.

Nursing in Home.—District Nursing Association. Support from Corporation.

Clinic and Treatment Centre.—Devizes Orthopaedic Clinic and Infant Welfare Centre.

Maternity Services.—Midwife: Provided by Wilts County Council.

Maternity Home.—A municipal maternity home is very badly required for the area, and I would go so far as to say it is a "Crying need," the private maternity home at Ivy House being quite unable to cope with present demands.

Hospitals.—Voluntary: Devizes and District Hospital. Public: Devizes and Pewsey Joint Isolation.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING YEARS 1939-40-41-42.

	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Typhoid & Pa. T. and Para. Typh. ...	0	0	1	(Ent.) 2
Scarlet Fever ...	27	59	21	12
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	0	5	4	3
Cerebro Spinal Fever ...	0	0	3	0
Pneumonia ...	9	42	15	13
Erysipelas ...	1	3	0	1
Measles ...	0	20	483	92
Diphtheria ...	3	2	1	1
Whooping Cough ...	0	2	29	14

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply.—Reasons of public safety preclude full details of the water difficulties under which our town has laboured during the War years, but it has been a trying period. Owing to shortage of water the following work was commenced in 1940 and completed in 1942:—

New well sunk at Shepherd's Shore.

New 1,200 ft. adit.

New pump delivering a maximum of 60,000 G.P.H.

Paterson chlorinator provided.

All the reservoirs were cleaned out in 1942. Sampling of the supplies is carried out monthly by the Water Engineer, and occasional

samples are taken by the Health Department from time to time. All reports of the Shepherd's Shore supply show that it is a water of the highest purity, but the Bourton supply is polluted. After heavy chlorination the Bourton water can be used for drinking purposes, and in times of severe drought it is utilised, but I feel that this supply should be closed down at the earliest possible moment, that is, when conditions return to normal. I am very satisfied with the co-operation given to me by the Water Engineer.

Sewerage and Drainage.—The Breachfield sewage works are most inadequate, and quite incapable of coping with the volume of sewage. The main works are a little better, but the same point applies. The increased volume of sewage arises from the Military Camps served by the new London Road sewer, also the flax factory. Conditions of nuisance exist at Belle Vue, The Nursery, and an attempt has been made by the Council to provide new drainage, but unfortunately owing to war conditions not a single tender was received for the job, and after much enquiry as to how it could be done the matter has had to be dropped for the time being.

Refuse Tip.—Arising from War conditions the Refuse Incinerator at the Wharf had to be closed down, and a tip was established on the Andover Road outside the Borough boundary. Trouble was experienced at first with flies and rats, and the tip was visited by a Ministry of Health Inspector in April, 1942, and in his report to the Council he expressed himself as satisfied. The tip is now under control, all rats have been cleared by Cyanide gassing, which is carried out every three months, but the fly problem remains. I do not consider the site suitable for controlled tipping, but it was all that could be obtained without taking good agricultural land, and after the War I shall be glad to see it closed down and a return made to incineration.

Swimming Pool.—This functions satisfactorily, although unfortunately at various times during the summer period it becomes overloaded, particularly when troops in the vicinity have to crowd in owing to there being no other facilities available for them. 1939 and 1940-41 were bad years in this respect. 1942 a little better.

HOUSING.

The actual position as regards action taken, dwellings condemned, and demolished can be obtained from the Sanitary Inspector's Report, but I may say that in spite of all that has been achieved, much remains to be done.

I estimate that apart from houses already condemned there will be at least another 150 houses which are totally unfit for human habitation, and will have to be demolished. About 75 of the above are old properties owned by the Corporation, and the two worst areas are at the Nursery and New Park Street. Overcrowding is at the present time exceedingly bad, and the shortage of houses of any kind a major problem.

Little can be done to relieve the situation at the present time, but I am pleased to note that the Council have adopted a bold plan for Post-War Housing involving the erection of 400 dwellings over a 10 year period, of which 100 houses will come into the First Year Programme.

I consider it undesirable that all new Council Cottages should be erected in a single area of the town, and I hope that you will be able to proceed with your new scheme (to re-plan the "Wiped out" areas near the centre of the town) and erect houses here and there so as to harmonise with the older building around. Certain cleared sites should of course be left as "Open space," but the larger ones such as will probably occur at The Nursery would lend themselves to re-development.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

HOUSING.

Inspection of Dwellings.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Total number inspected for defects under				
P. Health or Housing Acts	328	27	18	33
Inspections for the purpose	415	51	29	47
Number recorded under H. Con. Reg. ...	164	0	0	0
Number totally unfit for habitation ...	95	23	14	24
Number not reasonably fit	97	4	4	9
• Remedy of Defects during year.				
Informal action	68	4	4	7
Statutory Action (Housing).				
Proceeding under P. Health Act, 1936.				
Notices served	1	1	3	2
Defects remedied	1	1	2	2
Proceeding under Housing Act, 1936,				
Secs. 11 and 13. Demolition Orders	0	0	0	0
House Demolished as a result of D.O.				
served in previous years	10	0	0	0
Other Action under Housing Act, 1936,				
Secs. 11 and 13	0	0	0	0
Proceeding under Sec. 12, Hsg. Act, 1936	0	0	0	0
Overcrowding.				
Cases relieved during year	9	0	0	0
Persons concerned	63	0	0	0
Disinfestation.				
Bugs. Infestations remedied	5	27	46	32
Fleas. do. do. 	3	9	5	3
Rats. do. do. 	69	8	24	37

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Total number of Inspections	79	51	40	21
Defects remedied	17	6	4	2
Defects still outstanding	2	1	1	0

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

Fresh meat condemned as unfit.	T. C.	T. C.	T. C.	T. C.
Total quantity in tons/cwts.	9—12	6—4	5—18	3—7
Canned foods total quantity condemned				
as unfit in lbs.	51lbs.	211lbs.	160lbs.	240lbs.

The individual private slaughterhouses were closed after outbreak of the War, but the Bacon Factory was not closed until August, 1942. The large increase in canned foods condemned is due to the changed character of the National diet, and the rough handling which cases of canned foods apparently receive in transit.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDER.

					1939.		1940.		1941.		1942.
Registered cowsheds	...	...	...	...	14	...	14	...	14	...	14
Retail purveyors	...	...	...	...	18	...	18	...	18	...	18
Wholesale purveyors	...	...	...	...	14	...	14	...	14	...	14
Total inspections	...	...	...	...	42	...	40	...	64	...	58

Lack of materials and shortage of labour has been a factor preventing the proper remedying of sanitary defects in the Borough. There are numerous insanitary conditions requiring improvement which it will be quite impossible to carry out until after the War.

S. C. DRABBLE,
Temporary Acting Senior Sanitary Inspector.

DEVIZES AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

During the four years of War this hospital has pulled its weight, and the number of beds have doubled from 46 to 92. It has admitted and healed Service personnel under the Emergency Medical Scheme and is the only hospital to do so in the County. It is now served by a full range of consultants from larger hospitals at Bath and Bristol, has a full time radiologist, and a new Physio-Therapy Dept., small admittedly but very active.

It now ranks as an Emergency Service Hospital, Class 1A.

Admissions.	1939	1940	1941	1942
In-Patients	614	1,089	1,220	1,374
Out-Patient Attendances ...	3,115	3,506	6,677	10,395
Major Operations	316	550	605	538

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

(Maintained by Joint Committee Devizes and Pewsey.)

A glance at the table below will show that the Cubicle Block opened in 1938 has amply justified the cost by enabling all kinds of infectious disease to be treated, and suspicious cases to be sent in for observation. The years under review have been mainly uneventful with the exception of 1940, when an outbreak of Cerebro-spinal-fever enabled the staff to treat this too often very fatal infection with the new "Sulpha" drugs, the results being highly gratifying. Given early recognition, proper and adequate treatment, Cerebro-spinal-fever has now largely lost its terrors.

Admissions.	Total	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria.	C. Spinal Fever.	Other cases.
1939 ...	138	65	9	9	55
1940 ...	247	140	17	33	57
1941 ...	170	79	19	13	59
1942 ...	145	64	2	8	71

SMALL POX.

A case of malignant Small Pox occurred in the County in July, 1942. After consultation with the County Health Officers, I advised your Authority to provide facilities for prompt and rapid bulk vaccination and measures were taken to bring this to the notice of the public. The Aid Post at the Swimming Pool was utilised and there the public vaccinators, assisted by the Medical Officer of Health, vaccinated and later inspected 2,300 persons in only four weeks.

Several hundreds were vaccinated from the surrounding rural villages either communally at Schools, Village Halls, etc., and in their homes, whilst over 1,500 odd were dealt with at the Borough Depot.

The Women's Aid Detachments, Mobile Medical Services, and the W.V.S. gave unstinted and valuable help in this emergency.



